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GREAT COMMERCIAL  
PRIZE

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# **GREAT COMMERCIAL PRIZE**

**ADDRESSED**

**TO EVERY AMERICAN WHO VALUES THE PROSPERITY OF HIS COUNTRY.**

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**BY CHARLES C. COFFIN;**

**A MEMBER OF THE BOSTON PRESS.**

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## THE GREAT COMMERCIAL PRIZE.

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE PRESENT AND PROSPECTIVE COMMERCIAL POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES, AND A PLEA FOR THE IMMEDIATE CONSTRUCTION OF A RAILROAD FROM MISSOURI RIVER TO PUGET SOUND.

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Great events are transpiring in the world which have a direct and all-important bearing on the United States. China and Japan have recently been brought in connection with the rest of the world. The five hundred millions of beings in those countries are henceforth to be reached by the hand of civilization. Russia is extending its power, its enterprise, its lines of trade and traffic eastward to the Pacific, to seek in that direction an outlet for her trade, now denied her through the Black Sea. India under British rule is throwing its lines of railway in every direction. Australia is taking the proportion of an empire, yielding a hundred million dollars in gold per annum, with unequalled agricultural resources—with a population already numbering six hundred thousand, who speak the Anglo Saxon tongue, and who are animated with ideas of progress and advancement. The Islands of the Pacific—the half-way houses of trade and travel are feeling the vivifying influence of the time. Chili is building along her vallies and mountain peaks, railroads which shall bring the riches of the Andes to the sea. On our western shores, California, Oregon, Washington and Vancouver are awaiting the hand of industry to yield their riches. Around and in the Pacific Ocean are the “signs of the times.” The question arises as to the bearing of these movements on

the future of the United States? There is a great commercial prize before us. What are our relations to it? Can we make it ours; or are we to see it grasped by other hands?

In the following pages no attempt will be made to name the vastness of the prize, or its value; for its vastness and richness is incalculable. An attempt only will be made to set forth very briefly the means, the only means by which that prize may be secured! To that single point the attention of every American who loves his country's prosperity, is called.

There are but two river systems on the Pacific coast of this continent, which can be made, in any great degree, available for commerce—the Sacramento and the Columbia. The only commodious harbors on the Pacific coast, are connected with these river systems. The Columbia river is obstructed by a bar of sand at its mouth, which renders the navigation of its waters dangerous; but near by, and in effect connected with the Columbia, is Puget Sound, the great northern gateway of the continent, where, as at the Golden gate, a great metropolis is soon to rise, for nature has selected it to be in future years, one of the world's great centres of trade.

Ten years ago, San Francisco was a place of half a dozen houses; but now it is the great metropolis of the Pacific coast. Commerce has made it her mart, and a great state, the richest of all states in mineral resources, has grown as if by magic, with all the elements of civilization during the decade. But in the future, San Francisco is not alone to gather the riches of the West. The Northern gate-way is to receive its portion of trade.

Puget Sound is reached from the Pacific Ocean through the Straits of Fuca. It is as will be seen by a glance at the map, a series of deep indentations, sawn into the continent, close up to the coast range of mountains and down almost to the Columbia, as if Nature had been trying her hand at fancy cabinet work. These indentations are deep bays, navigable for the largest ships, securely land locked, reaching an hundred and fifty miles inland from the sea. There, in this scroll work, is 1500 miles of coast line in the United States territory, furnishing a number of

the best harbors in the world—deep, capacious, and surrounded with every thing needed by commerce. In the language of Commodore Wilkes, of the U. S. Exploring Expedition, “There is nothing to prevent the navigation of these waters by the largest ships-of-war afloat.

The Sound may be said to belong to the Columbia valley, which is, without doubt, one of the richest agricultural sections of the globe. The river itself with its tributaries might furnish waters for all of the machinery of the world. Immense beds of coal exist so near to the sound, that the coal may be tossed from the mine to the hold of a steamship. These coal fields are the only ones known to exist on the Pacific—from which California, and the steam marine of the Pacific in the future must receive supplies. In addition there are the gold fields of Frazer river, of Washington and Oregon near at hand. Its climate is milder than that of New England, although five degrees further north. Its rivers are filled with salmon, and the cod-fish is found in great abundance along its shores. Inland, are deposits of marble and iron, awaiting the quarriers' hammer. These are some of the surroundings of the Northern gate-way of the continent.

#### What is to be the future of Puget Sound ?

It is evident that the world is soon to see a great change in its thoroughfares of trade and travel. Hitherto, civilization has had communication with the Orientals, with India and China only by passages around the southern Capes of the two Continents; but the advancement of civilization to our Pacific coast places us midway between England and Europe on the one hand, and China and India on the other.

America hitherto, has advanced merely by using its right arm of Commerce—but now the time has come for it to stretch out its left arm, and lay its hand upon the trade of Asia. Puget Sound fronts China. It is less than 5000 miles from Shanghai, situated at the mouth of the Yang tse Kiang, the fifth largest river of the globe. It is but 3500 miles from Japan, 4000 from the mouth of the Amoor, and 7200 from Sydney in Australia. Turning eastward into the heart of our Continent, it is of itself an hundred and fifty miles inland from the Pacific. Four hun-

dred miles further inland are the navigable waters of the Missouri, leading to the Gulf of Mexico, and up the Mississippi, to the Lakes, and the Ohio to the Alleghanies. It is in a direct line with the great Lawrentian chain of water communication, reaching from the Atlantic, more than half way across the continent. In addition, nature has, as will be more fully shown, leveled the Rocky Mountains at the head waters of the Missouri, as if in kindness to man, that he may easily make a highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In all past time, civilized nations have prospered as they have controlled the trade of the East. England has enriched herself through her Indian Empire. "British India" says Hon. Mr. Martin, the Queen's late Treasurer at Hong Kong, "has remitted to England during the last fifty years, in bullion and produce, \$750,000,000." Sir Charles Forbes remarks that "the wealth which England has received from the natives of India would at compound interest pay off the national debt."

The commercial system which England has adopted is simple — it consists in making herself the world's banking house.

She has also adopted a consolidated political system, which is subordinate to her commercial system. In the language of Lord Brougham, it is her policy "to preserve the connection of the different component parts of a great and scattered empire, and to connect the whole mass." To do this, she fosters a steam marine—appropriating immense sums annually for mail service to Canada, Jamaica, Central America, South America, Australia, the East, the Mediterranean and Red Seas; and up the Pacific coast from Panama to Frazer river. She establishes lines of regular communication, of travel and trade at all points,—not only with her own colonies, but with countries under other governments, to bring all the arteries of the world in connection with that little heart, lying secure from harm in its sea-girt isle! To this end the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada has been constructed; for this, the Victoria bridge is rising above the waters of the St. Lawrence.

This policy, has made the British Empire the most wonderful nation of all time. "I must have ships, colonies, and commerce" said Napoleon, when seeking the overthrow of

England. "Render the colonies of England useless, or deprive her of them, and you break down her last wall and fill up her last moat," said Talleyrand. England understands her danger as well as she does the secret of her success; she knows that her existence as a first power, or her existence at all, is dependent upon her commercial activity. She must keep ahead of all other nations,—must continue to be the world's banker if she would maintain her power and position. Her statesmen understand the question, and with far reaching policy are laying plans worthy of a great empire to retain what has been won, and obtain new triumphs. Said Mr. Roebuck in Parliament, on the 20th of August last:—

"The present state of the North American continent was a matter of great interest to England. That continent was divided among three possessors. The southern and most important portion belonged to the United States of America, which ran up to where they met the dominion of England, which stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. England possessed the larger part of the continent, which proceeded northward until it reached upon its western frontier the territory belonging to Russia. We heretofore had planted colonies in the southern division that he had named. We had planted thirteen colonies in that country; those colonies had declared their independence, and had since increased to the number of thirty-five or thirty-six free States. We had created a power there which, *if something were not done by England as a counterpoise to the United States of America, would overshadow not only England but the earth.* He believed that in the northern part of the continent we had the means of establishing the counterpoise which he sought. If England would carry out a systematic plan of colonization upon that portion of the continent which now belonged to her, she would enable the world to resist what he believed would otherwise be the predominate power of the Anglo-Saxon race now established in the United States. It was on this ground that he solicited the attention of the House to the few words which he wished to address to them. The English possessed a portion of the American continent, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, north of the great lakes. Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Lower and Upper Canada, were colonies when the English became possessed of the country, and since that time they had not added to the territory one acre of land in the way of colonization. In the meantime the Americans had increased from thirteen to thirty-six independent States, and from 3,000,000 population to nearly 30,000,000, while the English had remained idle; and though they had seen the Americans become one of the greatest nations, they, notwithstanding that they had the means, had effected nothing as a counterpoise to the Americans. He wished to see this state of things ended."

He thought it proper that the rights of the Hudson Bay company under their charter should be ascertained, so that the whole of the land should be converted to the purposes of civilization, *and the dominion of England be carried from the Atlantic to the Pacific.*

Taking the Western side of Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains, they would cut the new colony which the right honorable Secretary for the colonies proposed to establish, and he believed plans had been laid before the right honorable Baronet for *carrying a railway completely across the Continent, so that a direct communication would be established between England and Vancouver's Island, by way of Halifax.* This was a magnificent scheme. He believed the right honorable Secretary for the Colonies was ambitious of renown; indeed, he had already given the world pledges of that ambition; and he would tell the right honorable Baronet that the man who carried out this scheme would have achieved greater things than even he (Sir B. Lytton) had done for literature, and his name would be handed down to posterity as a great Colonial Minister. *The accomplishment of such a scheme would unite England with Vancouver's Island and with China, and they would be enabled widely to extend the civilization of England.* When he referred to the civilization of England, he wished it to be compared with the civilization of America, and he would boldly assert that the civilization of England was greater than that of America.

The Colonial Secretary, Sir E. B. Lytton, said:—

“Already, by the Pacific, Vancouver's Island has been added to the social communities of mankind. *Already, in the large territory which extends west of the Rocky Mountains—from the American frontier, and up to the skirts of the Russian domains—we are laying the foundations of what may become, hereafter, a magnificent abode for the human race;* and now, eastward of the Rocky Mountains, we are invited to see, in the settlement of the Red River, the nucleus of a new colony, *a rampart against any hostile inroads from the American frontier, and an essential arch, as it were, to that great viaduct by which we hope one day to connect the harbors of Vancouver with the gulf of St. Lawrence.”*

With such a line of railway constructed, commencing at Halifax and passing via the Grand Trunk line to Montreal, up the Saskatchewan to Puget Sound, the position of England would be thus, by steam:—

From Shanghai,

“	“	by Cape of Good Hope,	15,500 miles,	70 days
“	“	by Panama,	14,000	“ 65 “
“	“	Puget Sound,	10,200	“ 37 “

From Sydney,

“	“	by Cape of Good Hope,	14,500 miles,	68 days
“	“	by Panama,	11,700	“ 60 “
“	“	by Suez,	13,500	“ 63 “
“	“	by Puget Sound,	12,400	“ 41 “

In view of the fact that a passage from England to China can be made in thirty four days less time than by the Cape of Good Hope is of itself sufficient to warrant the construction of the line by a power which has so much at stake. Surveys are now being made; one party under the command of Capt. Palliser is moving from Lake Superior west, and another, commanded by Capt. Elliot, is moving east from Puget Sound; they are to meet at the Rocky Mountains.

Meanwhile Her Majesty has summoned delegates from her American Provinces who are now assembled at London to advise in the matter. The probabilities are therefore that immediate action will be taken by the British interests to secure the trade and travel of the East by the construction of this line.

The grant of lands made by Congress to the Minnesota and Pacific Railroad Company, on that portion extending from St. Paul to the British line at Pembina, have been or will be offered to those owning the great railway lines through Canada. This will give those companies a route through our territory to the British Possessions on the Pacific. This road is entitled to two million acres of land along the valley of the Mississippi and Red Rivers, worth, with the road built, it is estimated, at least \$15 per acre.

It is plain that if a railway is carried across the continent through Canada, as it undoubtedly will be, or that if it is controlled by British interests, it will be of little value to American commerce, and also it is plain that if the terminus at Puget Sound is in the British dominions, the great metropolis of the North West will be a British metropolis.

Supposing that the road is built, and that British power controls it, it presents two dilemmas to the people of the United States: first, *it controls commerce, has all the benefits, and reaps all the advantages;* second, *it gives Great Britain the key of the North West!* These are plain, indisputable facts.

Let us look at the commercial prize.

The trade with China alone is estimated at the present time to be one hundred and thirty millions of dollars per annum, and the trade of the Asiatic Archipelago, at an additional hundred millions of dollars. This has been done with only a

few ports open to trade; but now, the entire Chinese and Japan Empires are open without restriction even to the navigation of the great rivers of China, the Yang-Tse-Kiang navigable for two thousand miles to the Thibet country, and the Hoang-Ho two thousand miles in length, draining Korkonor, bringing four hundred millions of people in connection with the civilized world.

The imports of Silk from China to England, direct in 1855 was 4,436,852 lbs. The amount from other countries to England the same year, 2,182,000 lbs. Teas and Silks are the two great staples of China and their production has been stimulated to a wonderful degree within the last ten years.

In 1849 the imports of Tea into England

amounted to	47,000,000 lbs.
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In 1856 it was	91,000,000 lbs.
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In 1849 the imports into the United States

amounted to	18,000,000 lbs.
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In 1856 it was	40,000,000 lbs.
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The route of vessels from England and the United States to China crosses the Equator twice which subjects Teas to much damage from high temperatures, and which with the long voyages causes high rates of insurance. But with a saving of thirty-four days time, as there will be by a railroad across this continent, England can afford to obtain her Teas and Silks by the most expeditious route, for the less rates of insurance and great saving of time, will send all light and valuable freights over such a route.

Hitherto the balance of trade with China has been largely against England. It has only been through the Opium trade that she has avoided paying specie for nearly all of the Teas and Silks imported. The United States also pays specie in part. To stop this drain of precious metals, and to supply goods instead, is the point to be gained. *The United States has the only great staple which China needs, — Cotton.* In 1856 the United States exported to Shanghai 221,716 pieces of drills and 14,420 of sheetings, against 1,420 of English. The Chinese will purchase only what they need. They are not yet educated into the use of even the comforts of civilization. An English

manufacturer exported knives to China, but chop sticks were not to be supplanted by that movement. Coarse Cottons are demanded, because they furnish cheap clothing, and in the manufacture of coarse cottons, England cannot compete with the United States. England supplies China with goods to the amount of two million dollars per annum only,—the balance being paid in opium and specie. The great necessity with England therefore is, to bring China close to herself,—annihilate time and space, and thus make a market for her manufactures, that she may remain as now, the world's banking house.

But in addition to the trade with China, which, although it is so vast, has but just begun, is the trade with the Amoor country, now being rapidly developed under Russian protection—a trade which is soon to command the attention of the world, and which from its locality, fronting Puget Sound, will like all other streams of traffic find its way across the Pacific to the great centres of the commercial world.

And in addition to this, is the Japan trade, now to us a fact—bringing fifty millions of people hitherto exclusives among the nations of the earth, into the line of the great highway of trade and travel, where the steamers starting from and for Puget Sound will take their coal—henceforth to be the western Pacific coaling station, as Puget Sound will be its eastern.

And again, in addition, Australian products will in a measure find their way to England over the Continental route. The trade of England with that Colony which is so rapidly taking the proportions of an Empire itself, is to be immense.

And still there is another addition—the India travel. The average time now between England and Calcutta by the straitest line—the Suez route is 48 days, but the passage by Puget Sound to Calcutta, can with ease be accomplished in 38—a saving of ten days. Through Puget Sound the trade and traffic between England and Western Europe and the East, will find its way and there, upon those waters, will rise the Liverpool of America. A great Metropolis must exist where the line of railway reaches the Sound, and that metropolis will be the controlling power of the great north western section of the continent.

Victoria now contains some seven thousand people, and the large amount of shipping in the harbor, the busy marts of trade, the grading of streets and the rush of business, all bespeak a large and growing city.

British troops are in barracks at that city. Royal engineers are there to co-operate across the Rocky mountains with a party that started from Montreal last Spring, and who will winter this year on the south fork of the Sascatchawan. The country is represented as eminently practicable, and the idea of extreme cold and deep snows is laughed at by the Hudson Bay Co.

The Legislative Assembly of Canada ordered a survey of the country west of Lake Superior in 1857; the report has been recently published. It says:—

"The Saskatchewan, which gathers the waters from a country greater in extent than the vast region drained by the St. Lawrence and all its tributaries from Lake Superior to the Gulf, is navigable by either the north or south branch for more than a thousand miles of its course, with the single exception of a few rapids near its confluence with Lake Winnipeg. So mild is the climate on the south branch of this great river, that the Indians hunt the buffalo on horseback all winter, and so little snow is said to fall that snow shoes are seldom used."

"That the extensive territory drained by the Saskatchewan and its tributaries is fit for settlement in as far as regards climate, is fully proved by the success which attend the farming operations which are carried on, although on a small scale, at the various trading posts throughout the country, and by the fact that the cattle and horses at these establishments are generally left to forage for themselves during the winter.

"As regards the soil, from what is yet known of the country, there is not perhaps on the globe so great an extent of territory so little broken by barren tracts.

"The valleys of the Red River and Saskatchewan included within British territory exceed 400,000 square miles, or equal in extent to England and Ireland, part of the German ocean, the English Channel, the north-eastern part of France, the whole of Belgium and Holland, the greater part of the Valley of the Rhine, together with the Kingdom of Hanover.

"The summer climate of this region appears to be very well adapted for agricultural operations. The summer temperature is nearly four degrees warmer than at Toronto, as ascertained by a comparison of

corresponding observations. Indian corn, if properly cultivated and an early variety selected, may always be relied on. The melon grows with the utmost luxuriance without any artificial aid, and ripens perfectly before the end of August. And yet with these truthful registers of climate we are accustomed to hear of late spring and early autumn frosts, deplored, lamented and held up as one of the great draw-backs of the Red River. All kinds of farm produce common in Canada succeed admirably in the district of Assiniboina ; these are wheat, oats, barley, Indian corn, hops, flax, hemp, potatoes, root crops, and all kinds of common garden vegetables."

The English government is taking efficient steps to forward the project. A corps of the Royal Engineers has been sent out. The London Times says :—

"The detachment is composed of picked volunteers, and embraces almost every trade and profession — surveyors, draftsmen, engravers, artists, architects, photographers, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, painters, miners, &c., such as only the Royal Engineers can produce. Steam engines, railway rails, and other mechanical appliances, either for steam or water power, will be sent after the party.

But one conclusion is to be drawn from all this—that England is using strenuous efforts to secure the greatest prize of all time.

A company (Nov. 16,) is already organizing in London with a capital of fifty millions of dollars to be aided by a liberal grant of crown lands for the consummation of the enterprize.

In view of all this, what is our position ? One of masterly, inactivity. Our government does nothing, and it is plain that if Americans would secure the trade of the East, that individual enterprise alone will accomplish the object. American commerce stands second only to England. It has fought its own way thus far, and now a great prize is before it. It is easy for American Commerce to lay its hand upon the wealth of China and Japan, and on all the riches of the East. Shall it be done ? Can it be done ? It is plain that if it is done at all, it can only be accomplished by completing a railway to Puget Sound at once. A railroad to San Francisco, desirable as it is to have such a road, will not secure the prize ; if at the same time we neglect that to Puget Sound. A railroad to Puget Sound, constructed immediately alone will take the key of the Northwest, from the hands of the Nation, which stands with us in the front rank of power.

The advantages, and the feasibility of a route from the Missouri river to Puget Sound are abundantly set forth in the exploration made by Gov. Stevens, by order of Congress. That route is undeniably better than any other route surveyed, but we claim that East of the Rocky Mountains there is a route better than that starting from St. Paul — a route which would have been surveyed by Governor Stevens, had his plans not been interdicted by the Secretary of War.

At the present time three lines of Railroad are being constructed from the Mississippi to the Missouri, one across Minnesota, and one north-west from St. Paul, to connect with and become a part of the British line. It will be plain to any one who understands the Physical geography of the country west of the Missouri, that these roads must find a western terminus east of the Rocky mountains. They must become united so as to converge towards two points, either to reach the Pacific through the Southern Pass or through the passes at the head waters of the Missouri. The elevated range known as the Black Hills, commences at the great northern bend of the Missouri — in the bluffs of the river, and runs south-west, the hills increasing in size, till at the head waters of the Platte, they become mountains, and are known at that point as the wind river chain. There are no known practicable passes at the head waters of the Platte through the range; but north-west of Council Bluffs, the Black Hills may be crossed without difficulty. The valley of the Yellow Stone lies beyond — the only rich, fertile section of well watered prairie now remaining in the north-west. It is a well timbered, alluvial section, from the Yellow Stone to the Rocky Mountains, and it is across this section that the survey would have been made, had Governor Stevens been allowed to carry out his plans. This route we maintain is the most feasible, the cheapest, the shortest and the most central of all lines between the Missouri and the Pacific.

Starting from La Crosse over the line now being constructed from that point — the Transit road which will reach the Missouri near the great Southern Bend, we will assume as our eastern terminus of the Pacific route, or rather the

place where all of the other roads should become a part of the Pacific line, a point near old fort Aux Cedres, or fort Pierre, about ten miles south of the 44th parallel. A line running down the Mississippi, will connect at the mouth of the big Sioux, with the Dubuque and Pacific road, at Sioux city, and a line, which we believe is already projected from thence to Des Moines, will, with that now being constructed from Des Moines to St. Louis, connect the *entire net work of railroads in the Union with the proposed eastern terminus of the Pacific line!* It will cross all the Iowa and Missouri lines.

The distances east, immediately connecting with our assumed terminus, wil be as follows ;

From Fort Aux Cedres,

"	To Milwaukee, via La Crosse,	- - -	525 miles
"	To St. Paul,	- - - - -	310 "
"	To Green Bay,	- - - - -	520 "
"	To Chicago, via Sioux City, Dubuque,	623 "	"
"	To St. Louis, via Des Monies,	- - -	508 "

This is sufficient to show that the central points, or the point which will best accomodate the whole country must leave the Missouri, somewhere in the vicinity of the great southern bend in latitude 44. From Aux Cedres, west, the distance to the Rocky Mountains, would be 670 miles. It may be divided in sections as follows :

From Fort Aux Cedres to the Black Hills, over a rolling prairie, 200 miles.

From the Black Hills to the Big Horn River, through an undulating country not unlike the Ohio lands, 110

From the Big Horn to the Yellow Stone, a rich wooded prairie country, 63

From the Yellow Stone to the Muscle Shell, over a wooded prairie, 140

From the Muscle Shell to the Hell Gate pass through the wooded and rich valley of the Upper Missouri, where it unites with Governor Steven's line, 157.

Total from Fort Aux Cedres, —————— 670

The saving of distance by this line over the line surveyed by Governor Stevens, starting from St. Paul, is great. The distance from Saint Paul to the Lewis and Clark pass is 1108 miles. The distance by Fort Aux Cedres would be 981 to the Hell Gate pass, a saving of 127. The saving in distance to Chicago would be about three hundred miles, and to Saint Louis about five hundred and fifty miles.

From the Rocky Mountains west, the line passes by the Hell Gate river and the Ceur d'Alene Mission over the great plain of the Columbia to Wallah Wallah, and thence up the Yakaima, through the Snoqualme pass of the Cascade range to Puget Sound, or down the Columbia to the Cowlitz, and thence to the Sound. The last named route is 150 miles longer than that by the Yakima, but it is easily constructed, and lies in one of loveliest vallies of the world, rich in agricultural resources, and timber. The central line would be easy of construction, and would present light grades. The entire length of road to be constructed between Fort Aux Cedres on the Missouri and Puget Sound is by the longest route (no tunnels) 1608 miles.

By the Cowlitz river and Ceur de Alene Mission,  
one short tunnel, 1433 "

By the Ceur de Alene and Yakima, two tunnels, 1383 "

But as the object of this article is only to call attention to one or two specific points, the details relating to the practicability do not require a place. They are fully set forth in the report of Governor Stevens. The estimated cost is about the same by either route. There is no grade so great as may be found on the Western Road in Massachusetts.

What then is the obstacle between the commerce of the United States and the great Prize which England is striving to obtain? Simply the construction of thirteen hundred and eighty-three miles of railway, through a country rich in resources, with maximum grades upon the line, less than those on the majority of roads now in operation in the United States!

With such a line constructed the great centres of the United States would be distant from the Puget Sound, as follows:

St. Louis,	1981 miles.
Louisville,	2134 "

Chicago,	- - - -	2006 miles.
Baltimore,	- - - -	9790 "
Cincinnati,	- - - -	2221 "
Green Bay, Wis.	- - - -	1903 "
New York,	- - - -	2949 "
Philadelphia,	- - - -	2895 "
Boston,	- - - -	2995 "
Charleston,	- - - -	1881 "

The entire distance between New York and Puget Sound with trains travelling at thirty miles per hour will be accomplished in about 4 days.

The question to be considered now is, can the country construct such a line of road? It appears that the Secretary of War, Mr. Jefferson Davis, in his estimates on different routes gives the following:—On the route from Council Bluffs through the south Pass, from the Missouri river to the entrance of the Black Hills, 520 miles, at \$35,000 per mile. This is rolling prairie and broken lands. From Fulton, on the Red river route, to the Llano Estacado, 449 miles at \$35,000 per mile, which is the minimum on all the routes. The average cost of 15 New England roads, including the Boston and Lowell, Boston and Maine, Vermont Central, Western, Boston and Providence, Eastern, &c., aside from land damages, was \$36,305 per mile. He estimates the cost of the Fulton line to San Francisco, 2000 miles at \$45,000 per mile, which is the average cost of the Massachusetts roads, including land damages.

There is reason to believe that the line from Fort Aux Cedres to Puget Sound, can be constructed more cheaply than the Fulton route, but assuming that to be about an average of the cost of roads in the United States, we have the following figures:—

By the longest route, 1608 miles, \$72,360,000.  
" the intermediate route, 1428 miles, including \$6,000,000 for a tunnel, \$70,710,000.

By the shortest route, 1383 miles, including \$10,000,000 for tunnels, \$72,285,000.

There will be but little rock cutting whichever route is taken. The supplies of timber are inexhaustible; besides, the line

may be constructed in short sections, which may be reached by water carriage from the eastern end, from the Big Horn, the Yellow Stone and the Jefferson fork of the Missouri, with a portage round the falls, and from the Columbia and the Sound.

With the donation of such a portion of public lands as can be obtained from Congress, or with such aid as has been granted to other lines, there is no reason to doubt the ability of the country, to construct the line immediately. It is but a small work compared with what has been accomplished during the last five years.

In 1852 we built 2541 miles of road.

" 1853	"	2748	"	"
" 1854	"	3549	"	"
" 1855	"	2736	"	"
" 1856	"	3578	"	"

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Total in five years, 15,152

In 1850 there were 7,355 miles of railroad in operation in the country: now there cannot be less than 30,000 miles, with 10,000 more in process of construction, costing 776,000,000 of dollars. Of this amount, in 1856 the country was indebted \$300,000,000. The entire amount of stock and bonds held by foreign hands was \$81,000,000 only! If, in 1856 the country put 3600 miles in operation, there surely need be no hesitancy in regard to our ability to construct 1500 miles within three years!—especially when a large portion of it is through one of the finest sections of the country, inviting to the emigrant, unsurpassed for fertility, and with a climate milder than that of New England! Inexhaustible supplies of timber are to be found the entire length of the route, with coal fields, marble deposits and iron mines. The snow in the pass of the Rocky Mountains does not average more than two feet in depth through the winters, and the temperature is identical with that of Madison, Wisconsin. Nature has done her part in removing obstacles from the line. The facilities are unequalled by any other route.

Will it pay? The question is all but superfluous. If it will pay England, why will it not America, with three thousand

miles of ocean travel in her favor, besides other incalculable advantages?

If St. Louis, Cincinnati, Chicago, and the great valley of the Mississippi, can afford to obtain Tea and Silks and East India goods shipped 17,000 miles to New York and transported 1100 miles by railroad, most assuredly they can afford to receive them by a sea route of 5000 miles and a land route of 1800! The freight on Tea between China and St. Louis at the present rate, is not less than \$60 per ton. The same ratio by Puget Sound would make it \$54 per ton. In addition to this saving, there is the less insurance, the gain of time, the exchange of capital more quickly, the increased flavor of the article. There is every reason to believe that the course of the Pacific trade will change; that our China goods will reach us by the way of Puget Sound.

But detail is unnecessary, where generalities are so plain.

*If a railway will pay any where in the world it will pay from the Missouri River to Puget Sound!* The country through which it will pass, is of itself adapted to sustain an immense population. A line leading west into the valley of the Yellow Stone, will carry emigration with it, for there is the home of the Buffalo, the region of fertile prairies and rich ravines.

It is evident that the tide of emigration, rolling continually on to the West, must be turned towards the head waters of the Missouri; it has already rolled against the Rocky Mountains at the South Pass, and south of that, is the great American Desert; but up the Missouri, beyond the Black Hills, there is still an Eden to be possessed.

The whole subject then sums itself into this, that the interests of the railroad lines reaching west from the Mississippi, the interests of the great cities of the country, and the interest of the nation, require that a line of railway should be immediately commenced at some point on the Missouri, near the Great Bend, to be carried to Puget Sound.

There is energy, ability, and enterprise, sufficient to build the road to Puget Sound, long long before England can carry her line across the continent, provided the work is commenced as it should be, without delay.

How shall the enterprise be started? Practical railroad men will see at a glance the salient points, and we cannot doubt that a movement will be made towards the enterprise. It is plain that all of the leading lines in the country are directly interested. Why may there not then be a general convention of railroad men — representatives of those lines, to bring about a combination of interests?

If a communication is had with the Pacific, each great commercial centre hopes to receive its share of the benefit, and each leading railway line hopes to do its share of the business. It is seen by the table of directions already given, that St. Louis and Chicago are about equi-distant from Puget Sound, and that the Atlantic cities—Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston and Charleston, stand respectively as they are connected with those cities. It is plain therefore, that each of those cities, and the lines of railway connecting them with the West are alike interested.

The entire subject commends itself to the immediate and earnest attention of our commercial interest. A movement should be made at once, to enlist the favor of the entire community, for there is not a section which will not be benefitted; a company should be organized; whatever aid can be obtained from government should be asked for; a reconnaissance of the route between the Missouri and Yellow Stone should be made, and such other measures as may be necessary, should be taken to secure that which history will set down as the great event of the century.

Again we say, it is easy for America to lay its hand upon the greatest prize of all time, to make herself the world's work-shop — the world's banker.

Such, in brief, is the statement of a great question — so great that its importance cannot be estimated. It comes home to the heart of every American who loves his country, who rejoices in her prosperity, her mission. Shall England or the United States *control the north-western section of this continent and the trade of the Pacific?* Shall England or the United States have the Metropolis of the north-west? Shall the European travel to the East, take New York and Boston, Chicago

*and St. Louis in its course, or shall Halifax and Montreal receive that travel?*

It is desirable that there should be a Railroad to San Francisco, as there will be before long, for the energy and enterprise of the country demand it ; but a road constructed to any other point on the Pacific than Puget Sound will fail of securing the Prize. *England must be headed off in that quarter!*

If, in the next three years we build a line of railroad from the great southern bend of the Missouri through the valley of the Yellow Stone and Columbia river to Puget Ssund, the trade, the travel, the wealth, the influence, the power is ours ! Build that road, and America will be the controlling power of the world ; neglect to build, and England takes the prize !

This is no sectional question ; for Georgia and Maine, alike are interested in it. Shall American cotton manufactured in American looms, supply China and Japan, or shall it be Algeria and India staples manufactured in English looms ? Charlestion is nearer Puget Sound than Boston, and the entire community of States east of the Mississippi, is nearer China and Japan by Puget Sound than by any other route that can be found by San Francisco or San Diego !

What are the objections ? None. There is plenty of water, wood, building material, with light grades, a climate milder than that of New England the entire distance, with an average depth of snow of *only two feet in the pass of the mountains through the winter !\** with fertile soils—with a country capable of sustaining a dense population, with iron and marble on the line, with inexhaustible water power—with gold and coal at the western terminus—with an unequalled harbor, with the whole line, on the shortest possible route between the Pacific, the Missouri and the lakes connecting also with the great lines of railway running east and South, and all the net-work of roads in the Union !

\* The elaborate report of Governor Stevens settles two points in regard to the mountains—that the passes are practicable, and that there is no obstruction by snow. We quote from his report.

*The Passes.* “The Northern Little Blackfoot Pass is at the source of one of the North forks of Hell Gate river, termed by Lieutenant Mullan, Little Blackfoot river, and is remarkably easy. The Indian trail passing here, is a well-worn road, and

The only possible objection that can be raised is, that the present population of the Pacific coast is in California : granted. But the population of Oregon and Washington already exceeds an hundred thousand, and the construction of the road will precipitate population in that section. The question is one of the future, and not of the present. It is to secure the prize.

In the consummation of the project, the question addresses itself, *first*, to the great lines of railway running east from the Missouri river — the through lines to Charleston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston ; *secondly*, it addresses itself to the merchants located in the great centre of trade — at Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville, New Orleans, Charleston, Cincinnati, Buffalo, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Albany, Philadelphia, New York and Boston : *thirdly*, it addresses itself to the government as an economical and political measure, whether England or the United States shall collect the revenue, and hold the political power incident to the controlling influence of a

is perfectly practicable for wagons. The dividing ridge is an inconsiderable hill three to five hundred feet high." Page 99.

"On the Blackfoot trail, the grades will vary from thirty-five to forty-five feet per mile. The valley of the Bitter Root will involve several heavy bridge crossings, some sharp curvatures, but no grade exceeding fifty feet, and few approaching forty." Page 100.

*Climate.* "Alexander Culbertson, the great voyageur and fur trader of the upper Missouri, and who for the last twenty years, has made frequent trips by land from St. Louis to Fort Benton, has never found the snow drifted enough to interfere with traveling. The average depth of snow is twelve inches, and frequently the snow does not exceed six inches." Page 130.

"On reaching the St. Mary's valley, information was received from the Flathead Indians that the passes were generally practicable with horses throughout the winter." Page 132.

"The results may be summed up as follows: In the Rocky Mountains the greatest average depth of snow found by Lieut. Mullan, from the 28th of November to the 10th of January was only twelve inches, and *that only for a short distance over the divide!* On the divide leading to Hell Gate river, there was but two inches of snow on the 31st of December. On the 27th of January, the Indians were crossing the mountains. In March, Lieutenant Mullan went to Fort Benton by the Southern and Little Blackfoot Pass, finding but ten inches on the first pass, and no snow on the second pass.

"Lieutenant Grover left Fort Benton on the Second of January, no snow having fallen till the previous evening, crossing the divide by Cadott's Pass, he found but one foot of snow on the divides on the Blackfoot trail." Page 132.

great metropolis: *fourthly* it addresses itself to all who would derive the immediate benefits of a direct trade with the east, make America a hive of industry, and extend its principles of liberty and social equality throughout the world.

Boston Dec. 4th, 1858.

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